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ABSTRACT

The paper distinguishes American and Canadian applications of the terms "mainstreaming" and "integration" in relation to placement of exceptional children in settings which foster interaction between them and their non-handicapped peers such as regular classes in neighborhood schools. The two terms are seen to represent distinctive social constructs embedded in the cultural traditions of each country. Differing cultural contexts are examined in terms of either the "mainstream-minority" model which assumes the desirability of assimilation into the "mainstream" or the "group-integration" model which assumes a more complex configuration in which groups maintain their integrity within the larger society. Noted is the social integration model's goal of complete integration with no special classes. Stressed is the two-way process inherent in integration in which both group members (e.g., the disabled) and other group members (e.g., the non-disabled) change toward mutual adaptation. Administrative implications of the social integration model are discussed in terms of actual services provided in various Canadian provinces. Finally, Canadian research based on the integration model stressing mutual influence, learning, and adjustment in both groups is encouraged. Includes 46 references. (DB)

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Alternative Models for Integration of Exceptional Students: Administrative and Research Implications[1]

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The movement towards providing exceptional children with an education "appropriate to needs" has become known as mainstreaming in the United States, although the connotations of this term have received little formal examination. The use of this term in Canada and elsewhere (cf. Australia, and to a very limited extent the United Kingdom), represents a cultural-linguistic borrowing. "Mainstreaming" is an American coinage, accompanied by several institutional assumptions about society and education, and reflecting a model for integration which has been codified in Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The term integration is most commonly employed in this country to describe the placement of exceptional children in settings which foster interaction between them and their non-handicapped peers. For the most part these settings are identified as regular classrooms within neighbourhood schools.

It is notable that contributors to the Canadian

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literature in this area frequently fail to discriminate between 'mainstreaming' and 'integration', which are sometimes used interchangeably even within a single source (e.g. Bachor and Crealock, 1986; O'Reilly and Duquette, 1988; Winzer, 1990). It is the present writer's contention that the terms represent distinctive social constructs that are embedded in the cultural traditions of each country. Further, the terminology employed is itself a form of social action, and adoption of a mainstreaming or integration model has formal implications for the direction of research and administrative practice in special education across national systems (Bowd, 1987; Biggs-Berge and Berge, 1988).

The Cultural Context

Berry (1986) has proposed two models to illustrate some central features of group relations in the United States and Canada (figure 1). Berry's objective was to describe the primacy of ethnic relations in one society as opposed to race and minority relations in the other. However the models may very usefully be employed to illustrate relations between persons with special needs and the non-handicapped in each society. One is the "mainstream-minority" model, the other the "group-integration" model.

Insert Figure 1
about here

The mainstream-minority model supposes that "minorities" need "fixing". Berry (1986) cites Montaigne's phrasing of early French policy towards Native Peoples in Canada: "They need to be gently polished and reclaimed for humanity." The mainstream-minority model is functionally consistent with a remedial approach (cf. Bowd, 1977) in Native education and a diagnostic-medical model in special education.

In the "mainstream-minority" model there is assumed to be a single dominant culture (the "mainstream"), a number of subordinate groups ("minorities"), and perhaps some fringe groups such as refugees. Extrapolated to the educational milieu, and in particular to the role of the special education mainstreaming movement, exceptional groupings of students may be identified with "minorities", sometimes with fringe groups. The model is assimilative. That is to say, that acceptance as part of the "mainstream" is a universal goal. It is predicated, however, upon the reduction of those differences which characterize the members of various "minorities". Because of this the model permits degrees of transition between minority status and mainstream

membership, and allows for the possibility of groups remaining outside of the mainstream with attendant fringe status. Indeed, such groups may share ethnic, language and economic minority status as well as intellectual or other disabilities. American educators are increasingly aware of this "unserved population", and concerned about how to bring members of it into the mainstream (Chandler, 1985).

The group-integration model assumes a more complex configuration in which no single group is dominant in all social spheres, and small groups are incorporated within larger ones in a variety of complicated ways. The principal contrast between this and the mainstream-minority model is that groups tend to maintain their integrity within the larger society. Within Canada's cultural mosaic (Porter, 1979) mainstream-minority dynamics are de-emphasized and integration rather than assimilation becomes the driving force. Individuals and groups within the larger society are not measured against a yardstick of common "mainstream" values to the extent that may be apparent when mainstream-minority dynamics are operative.

Relevance to special education

There are some who would argue that placing an analysis of mainstreaming and integration within a cultural and

political context may be misleading. Kauffman and McCullough (1984) claim that the movement to "mainstream the handicapped has been driven more by political considerations and loyalty to social revolution than by...concern for handicapped individuals" (p. 201). However, they fail to successfully demonstrate that "concern for handicapped individuals" is not itself driven by a set of social, ethical or philosophical concerns, which need not exclude "social revolution", whatever that may be.

Norman Kunc (1984) explicitly identifies integration as a moral and political issue: "If we are to succeed at incorporating exceptional students into the regular class, it is essential that we have the moral and political support of teachers and principals" (p. 7). Integration presupposes a heterogeneous majority and consequently is not built upon an insistence that differences be eliminated or significantly reduced. Rather than focussing upon change among minority group members (i.e. assimilation or "preparation for mainstreaming") the group-integration model implies <u>mutual</u> adaptation when groups interact. This is not to say that all adherents of a mainstream-minority view ignore mutual adaptation, but rather to point to a trend which often distinguishes the two models. It must also be recognized that there are advocates of a group-integration approach in

the United States who, while continuing to employ the terminology of mainstreaming, reject its basic assumptions (e.g. Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage and Jaben, 1985).

Integration does not share the mainstream-minority assumption of a continuum of services predicated upon the concept of "least restrictive environment" (Reynolds, 1962; Dunn, 1973). The cascade placement model is accompanied in practice by a lock-step set of requirements embodied in the ubiquitous Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This is designed to ensure, among other things, that entry to the mainstream is contingent upon the attainment of prerequisite competencies in an accountable fashion.

Norman Kunc (1989) has continued to work for the implementation in Canada of what he calls "complete integration". By this he simply means the absence of segregation in separate classes, whether for part or all of the school day. Other writers in Canada and some in the United States have shared a similar understanding of the pragmatics of integration (e.g. Forest, 1986). The case for integration is entirely consistent with the group-integration model. Integration is founded in the belief that all children have a right to be educated alongside of their peers, as part of their community, in a regular classroom. This is simply because all members of the community are

considered to have the right, within a democratic multicultural society, of living and working side-by-side as adults. To deny any children the opportunity to learn together, unsegregated, is to deny them the later opportunity of living together fully within the larger society (Wolfensberger, 1972).

Advocates of a human rights approach to integration have claimed that impediments to it have chiefly arisen from the reluctance of members of established groups within society to change their behaviour and attitudes towards persons with disabilities. As many writers have observed (Kunc, 1984; Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage and Jaben, 1985) the problem with integration is not the individual's disability, it is the attitude of others towards it. Segregation of students with disabilities is the system level response corresponding to social rejection by individuals. From a group-integration perspective, segregation does not merely impose an injustice upon the minority who are isolated, but also upon the majority who are segregated as well. Segregation deprives non-handicapped children of opportunities to learn about disabilities and to appreciate the real diversity of their community.

Persons with disabilities: A minority group?

Group membership is based upon shared characteristics and common interests recognized by both members and non-members of that group. Some writers have advocated segregated placements for exceptional students by referring to their inability to develop a positive self concept when the reference group is normal children. Coleman (1983) refers to the role of handicapped persons as "deviant", "incompetent" and "with little social status...in this society" (p. 44). Segregation protects the group of students who are exceptional in a way all too reminiscent of the case for ethnic segregation so familiar to educators of the 1950's. Formal definition of groups varies within every society. There is no doubt that group status of persons with disabilities besides being informally recognized is formally defined by society in legislation and policy statements and through advocacy by exceptional persons themselves.

Mainstreaming and integration: placement and pedagogy

A recent comment by a Canadian educator (Sparks, 1990) notes consistent demands for supportive integration by organizations representing parents of exceptional children. He contrasts this with the division that continues among educators and confronts the most common myths regarding

implementation. Although it is likely that only a small proportion of Canadian educators oppose integration in principle, it seems probable that many more are confused by the language of "mainstreaming" and are prepared to accept certain forms of segregation because they are thought to represent the "least restrictive" alternative. In this guise segregation may even be characterized as a different "intensity" or stage of mainstreaming (Bingham, 1990). A guest writer in Margret Winzer's popular introductory Canadian textbook (Winzer, 1989) makes the following comment which implicitly reflects the vision of a mainstream-minority model:

> The process of integration parallels the degree of handicap from profound to mild. For the profoundly and severely delayed group of students for example, locational and possibly some social integration are both desirable and realistic objectives. Clearly these forms of integration represent a marked improvement over traditional, segregated educational settings. To expect that such children will share in the functional/academic curriculum of the regular classroom, however, is unrealistic (Nesbit, 1989, p. 15).

This kind of thinking supports continuing segregation - indeed, for certain groups it becomes inevitable. Persons with severe and profound handicaps are assigned fringe group status because they must be educated ("trained"?) in isolation from the larger society to meet their special

needs. This ensures that they will never be prepared to interact with non-handicapped persons, and that the non-handicapped will through ignorance, continue to avoid all contact with them. It is again an interesting parallel to note that assignment of fringe status to cultural minorities (e.g. some aboriginal Canadians) has been rationalized as being 'realistic'.

The group-integration model defines integration as a two-way process. As marginal groups integrate they change, but continue to retain some identity of distinctiveness. Equally important, members of other groups change as well. For example, persons with intellectual impairment (whether mild, moderate or severe) grow in adaptive social, emotional and cognitive behaviour within supportive integrated environments, as do the non-handicapped individuals with whom they interact. Segregation however, ensures its own continued existence, and the notion of least restrictive environment has become a vehicle for the perpetuation of segregation in a society governed by mainstream-minority dynamics.

The implementation of both mainstreaming and integration involves attitude and behaviour change on the part of teachers, administrators and students. Put rather simplistically, mainstreaming focuses on change in the

minority prior to change in the mainstream. Integration within a group-integrated model focuses on mutual adaptation. It is worthwhile noting that the bulk of research in North America has assumed a mainstream-minority model and has attended to fostering appropriate adaptive behaviour of the minority (including parents), and the consequent growth of attitudes of acceptance within the majority (Allsop, 1980; Bello, 1989; Bender and Evans, 1989; Coleman, 1983; Guralnick and Groom, 1988; Leyser, 1988).

Several Canadian and U.S. studies have focussed on the adaptations needed by non-handicapped teachers and pupils to facilitate integration (Hummel, Dworet and Walsh, 1986; O'Reilly and Duquette, 1988; Duquette and O'Reilly, 1988; Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage and Jaben 1985; Winzer and Rose, 1986). However little or no research has been conducted on the attitudes of handicapped groups towards the larger social configuration or towards each other.

Administrative implications

Latham characterizes mainstreaming as "a victim of disincentives" (p.33) attributing its limited success to high student teacher ratios, inadequate preservice training, lack of teacher rewards, lack of administrative commitment to regular class placement, economic advantage tied to

segregation, the external legislative mandate and finally, a combination of inertia and conditioning among teachers and administrators. These disincentives which exist within the American mainstream itself, result in widespread failure to accommodate exceptional learners in regular classes.

It is apparent that the mainstreaming model can be employed to maintain the segregation of ethnic group members who are discipline problems, by identifying them as students with disabilities. What would have been called "segregation" from an ethnic perspective can now be referred to as a placement "appropriate to needs". The mainstream-minority model rests upon the widespread acceptance of two assumptions which have dominated administrative thinking in American special education: the continuum of service delivery placement and the categorical model of exceptionality. Neither is useful, nor perhaps compatible with a group-integration model.

Canadian legislation and policy concerning integration varies considerably from province to province. According to a survey conducted by the Council for Exceptional Children in Canada (Canadian CEC, 1989) exceptional students are served in a variety of ways. However the chief implication of this survey and of others, (Rathgaber and Dworet, 1989) is that only limited data exist to describe services in Canada.

Categorical models for service delivery exist in six provinces although definitions and funding mechanisms vary considerably. The majority have chosen to pass legislation guaranteeing education for all, regardless of handicapping conditions. The cases of Ontario and New Brunswick represent contrasting degrees of commitment to a group-integration model. The 1980 amendment to the Ontario Education Act (formerly known as Bill 82) differs in several key respects from PL 94-142 by which it was considerably influenced.

The Ontario legislation supports integration in the regular classroom to the extent that "appropriate to needs" placement is assumed. However, in practice IPRCs (Identification, Placement and Review Committees) have reinforced the view that segregated classes and special schools may be regarded appropriate to needs and not contrary to a policy of integration. Nevertheless several school authorities in Ontario, such as Wellington-Waterloo Separate School Board, have successfully integrated exceptional children for more than a decade since their segregated classes were abandoned (Sparks, 1990).

In the provinces of British Columbia and New Brunswick a less ambiguous commitment to supported integration has emerged. The B.C. School Act makes no reference to "special"

education or "special needs" children. Every child is guaranteed an education in the regular classroom of his or her neighbourhood school - unless it is "in the interests of the child" to do otherwise (McBride, 1990).

New Brunswick (Leavitt, 1987) has adopted an approach of supported integration in the regular classroom. The Schools Act currently indicates that exceptional students should be placed in regular classroom settings, although this is qualified by noting "to the extent that is considered practicable by the Board having due regard for the educational needs of all pupils" (N.B. Department of Education, 1988, p. 11). Removal from the regular classroom is expected to be temporary, and to be accompanied by a goal-oriented plan focussing on the return of the student to the regular classroom.

Some writers assuming a mainstream-minority model focus on the ways school personnel might assist parents and students prepare for mainstreaming:

> ...counsellors may wish to initiate and implement parent training and education activities in areas and on topics in which parents expressed an interest, such as behaviour management strategies... (Leyser, 1988, p. 368).

There is also a tendency for some contributors (e.g. Allsop, 1980) to see mainstreaming as a "top-down" administrative process. Analysing services to students with

physical handicaps, she points out that mainstreaming may involve placement in either "a self-contained special education class or a regular classroom" (p. 37).

It is significant that many writers assuming a mainstream-minority model favour preparation of non-handicapped students through emphasizing similarities and de-emphasizing differences:

> Differences may be more apparent, and children need to develop tolerance for differences; but likenesses are what build empathy and understanding and are what bind people together (Allsop, 1980 p. 41).

Contrast the previous quotation with an analysis of integration based on the recognition of the requirements of majority adaptations for integration:

> Rather than asking, 'How do we fix the child?' we begin by asking, 'How is the school building handicapped? How can we get elevators and ramps built?' But more importantly we begin to ask, 'How are the other students handicapped in terms of their attitudes towards disabled children? ...How am I, the teacher, handicapped, and how does my handicap interfere with my ability to work with the child?' (Kunc, 1984 p. 6)

The objective shifts from changing the minority so that it can enter the mainstream, to mutual adaptation. If the principal and staff are provided with appropriate support services, the regular classroom teacher will be able to employ a variety teaching approaches which better serve all

the students in an integrated classroom (Sparks, 1990).

The remedial assumptions which some writers find consistent with mainstreaming across a range of segregated placements present a distinct contrast: the "Specialist" teacher's role "is to help remediate deficits or weaknesses and to provide compensatory education when appropriate" (Moskowitz, 1988, p. 541)

In the United States programs of "preparation for mainstreaming" are usually based on the assumption that segregation can be used to get students ready for integrated placements. Macklam (1984) describes a structured learning program "for high school students unable to function adequately in mainstream settings" (p. 203) in Massachusetts. Students are "guided" towards behavioural goals, and mainstream placement is contingent upon them being achieved. The kinds of goals cited reflect an assumption of a relatively static teacher centred learning environment in the mainstream itself: students must "participate verbally" at least once in each class; arrive at school on time daily; complete homework in every class at least once a week; "stop saying shut-up"; stop swearing; sit with other kids at lunch; write more; and so on (p. 205). In the past similar goals have been set for minority students such as Native Indians, before considered for acceptance within the mainstream (Bowd, 1977).

Attitudes, social behaviour and attainment: The research agenda

It is now a truism that the course of research in the social sciences reflects, in part at least, the social agendas of more powerful groups within the culture (Gergen, 1985). It is useful to examine research in terms of assumed models for mainstreaming and integration. The dominant emergent pattern is one in which research on the effectiveness of mainstreaming in the United States is characterized by many studies of mainstream attitudes toward, and treatment of, persons with disabilities (Winzer, 1987). Inquiry concerning the attitudes of special needs groups towards members of the mainstream, or of one exceptional group towards another, is seldom in evidence.

Research on the instructional implications of mainstreaming in the United States most frequently concerns changes in the achievement and "adaptive" behaviour (Gloeckler and Simpson, 1988) of exceptional groups as they become more like the mainstream. Little research on integration has been conducted in Canada, however it is contended that Canadian inquiry might most appropriately be based on an integration model in which the focus is mutual influence, learning, and adjustment in both groups.

Research on social behaviour conducted within a

mainstream-minority framework has emphasized the importance of facilitating cooperative play and other social skills. The focus has been on minority adaptation: "Although important aspects of peer-related social interaction can be facilitated by involvement in mainstreamed settings... systematic training [of developmentally delayed children] must occur" (Guralneck and Groom, 1988, p. 424). This viewpoint characterizes much American investigation in the area (Guralneck and Groom, 1985; Jenkins, Odom and Speltz, 1989; Jenking, Speltz and Odom, 1985; Novak, Olley and Kearney, 1980, Strain and Odom, 1986).

Social behaviour involves reciprocal interaction between actors, and research on integration in Canada might more profitably attend to this. There is a dearth of research in this country on the ecology of integrated classrooms. The recording of instances of cooperative play, imitation, aggression, attention-seeking, rejection and other individual social behaviours needs to be extended to the non-handicapped student. But more important the structure (communication, status and affect) of the integrated classroom group as a whole needs study.

Studies of achievement in integrated classrooms have generally been characterized by two concerns: declines in majority achievement or improvements in achievement among

exceptional students[2]. A large part of such research has depended upon standardized achievement measures and have assumed minority adaptation to the mainstream curriculum (Madden and Slavin, 1983). A group-integration model implies the need for greater study of curricular and pedagogical adaptations and their specific relationships with attainment among minority and majority students. Integration is usually supported by specific instructional modification such as peer tutoring, metacognitive strategy implementation, grouping adaptations, the presence of aides, technological support and so on. Specific effects on attainment in particular skills may be masked by research which simply looks for broad achievement gains or losses, and seldom finds unequivocal evidence for them.

Conclusions

The success of integration in Canada depends upon two basic factors: first, a clear conceptualization of the objectives and context of service provision to students (including those with disabilities); second, a commitment from the entire school community, including the financial support of government and the professional support of

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2 Gifted and talented students are an exception to this trend.

educators.

The group-integration model implies that all children have a right to regular classroom placement in their neighbourhood school[3]. This principle does not deny the right of such children, through their parents or advocates, to claim segregated services where those are in the interests of the child. This model, by rejecting the U.S. service continuum implies greater collaboration between teachers, parents and community advocates.

Finally, the group-integration model is consistent with recent proposals (e.g. Pugach and Sapon-Shevin, 1987) for the merger of special and regular education. In addition to rejecting the principle of assimilation, it recognizes that all students differ along a continuum and that services should be provided to members of different groupings (ethnic, cultural, linguistic and exceptionality) in a non-discriminatory educational system.

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[3] Children who present a physical danger to others are excepted.

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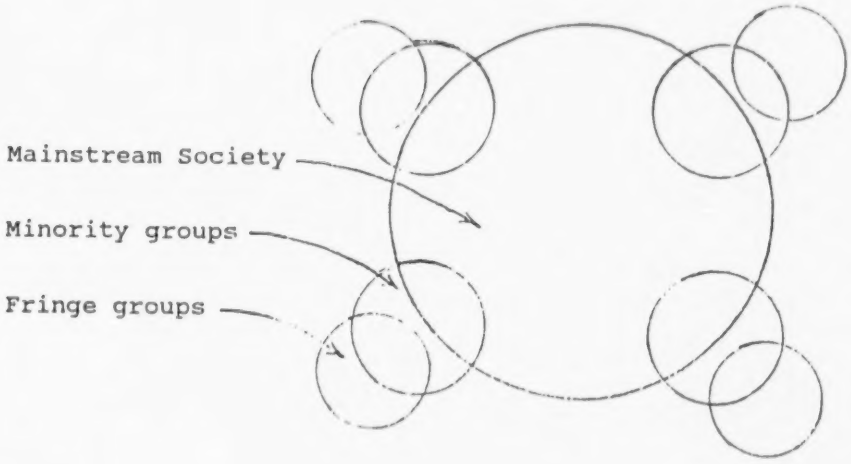
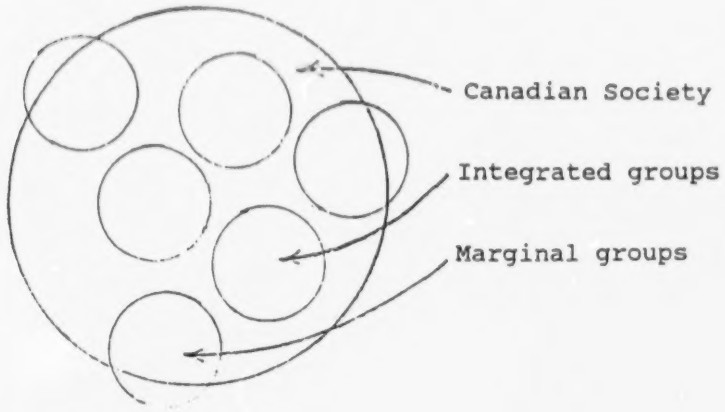
Figure 1

Two Implicit Models of Group Relations[1]

Mainstream-Minority Model



Group-Integration Model



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1 Adapted from Berry, 1986.